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George Washington built a home and not a mere place to live in or work around. Therefore, it is still the most admired farm place in America. Above is a rear view of the Mount Vernon homestead, showing how the "detaching" or de-occupationalizing" process may be applied without lowering of utility values.

Uncle Sam and the Farm Home

By AARON HARDY ULM

This is the second of a series of articles by Mr. Ulm on farm life and farm management.

BETTER farm homes, more efficient and more artistically laid out farmsteads, the adaptation of "city conveniences" to life in the country, are items of farm improvement that are now engaging much of the best thought devoted to agricultural welfare.

This recrudescence of interest in the farm home isn't due to acceptance of the widely prevalent notion that the average American farm home is necessarily inferior to the average American town or city home.

"Country homes are improving in comfort, attractiveness and helpfulness," said the famous Roosevelt Country Life Commission more than ten years ago. Since that report was made improvement has gone ahead at much more rapid pace than ever before.

But during the last half century the farm home hasn't received as much expert attention nor has it so benefited from modern progress as other parts of the farm, like the barn and the field.

"Today, in many of the best farming sections, the barn that houses the cattle, rather than the building that houses the farmer and his family, is the keynote of the farm," said a farm home specialist to the writer recently. "That is, the prosperity and progressiveness of the farm are judged most by the equipment provided for taking care of the cows and horses."

The specialist in question does not take a pessimistic view of the farm home or the conditions surrounding it. He believes that when all values are given proper rating the average farm home is superior to the average city home, especially if you estimate correctly those advantages that cannot be procured by the city home-maker but which necessarily adhere to the country home.

In fact, that is the view of most or all the farm-home specialists in the United States Department of Agriculture, which is now including farm-home subjects in its wide range of research activities.

But the specialists admit that they know very little about it and assert that no one knows much. Only a very few, and limited, surveys of farm home conditions have been made, and there is virtually no scientifically accurate data with which to make past comparisons. While city housing has a voluminous literature, that of country housing is about as vague as the facts and conditions are various.

What they do know about, but by no means all about, are the possibilities available to the farm home.

"The real efficiency in farm life and in the country is not to be measured by historical standards but in terms of its possibilities," the Country Life Commission declared with much truth.

And it is on possibilities that the specialists in the main are working.

The country knows little of the kind of congestion to be found in most cities, though investigators have often found places where something analagous did prevail. But, on the whole, country houses are well provided with space. A recent survey showed that they averaged more than seven rooms each in the farming states of the North and West.

While they are usually large enough, the average farm homes are crudely designed and in many respects poorly equipped. With exceptions that will occur to anyone, the average American farmstead makes little appeal to the sense of form and beauty.

Students of agriculture have come to realize that the farm home must compete with the city home, just as farm work must compete with city work. If the right balance is maintained between rural and urban population, life on the farm must be made satisfactory to the home-maker, the farm woman.

The work of the United States Department of Agriculture on behalf of the farm home follows several different lines. The chief one lies within agricultural extension activities, or the home economics branch of agricultural extension. This has to do mostly with aid carried directly, via home economic workers, to farm women, and aims chiefly at helping them in making the best of the facilities already existing.

During the last few years the department has undertaken researches having to do immediately with farm home facilities. These as compared with other and better known researches, for example, those having to do with plants and animals, have been meager, but are extensive enough to show what can be done for the farm home. They prove that the well-laid-out farmstead, the convenient, comfortable and attractive farm home, and the household refinements quite often regarded as peculiar to ordinary homes in cities only, are not available solely to the well-to-do or "gentleman" farmer.

This is particularly true of the farmhouse itself. One of the comparatively new departmental projects deals with house designing for farmers. Any farmer can procure from the department complete plans for any one of several types of houses; not large and magnificent houses, but in the main small and comparatively inexpensive dwellings.

The departmental architects don't propose for modern day farm construction anything like the old-style colonial residences that still are admired by those who view them—chiefly from the outside. When the writer was shown the plans of a house designed primarily for the South, he was astonished to note that the space given to porches was very small.

"The big porch all around the house looks well and in summer is very comfortable," said he, "but it is rarely worth the space and the cost. This is particularly true when viewed with reference to the disadvantages going with it. For such an arrangement makes the living rooms dark and somber, the exclusion of sunlight may render them unhygienic, and it is more important to have comfortable living rooms than vast porches that serve mostly for decorative use only. Furthermore, being fully exposed, the housewife desires to keep the porches tidy at all times which involves much extra sweeping and other caretaking."

Another violation of southern tradition involved in departmental plans for southern farm residences is the inclosure of foundations.

"Nothing spoils the looks of a house so much as for the structure to sit over an open space as if on stilts," said one of the architects. "Full ventilation under the house can be procured without it."

One of the most interesting sets of plans developed in the agricultural department is predicated on the ambitious farmer's desire to expand his home as his family develops and his means grow.

Many beginner farmers want to erect a small house to which they can add as necessity arises. This desire has resulted in much of the ugly and inconvenient house construction found in most country districts. The basic construction isn't designed with a clear view of how future additions are to be made. For help over that difficulty the department offers to farmers a three-installment design for a residence, that may grow along natural and harmonious lines from a four-room cottage to five or six rooms and then to seven or eight rooms. At any of the stages the house looks like a real dwelling. Its growth is not along lines of living space alone. The first proposed additions are a new